



## State Senator Robert Garton District 41



### HOOSIER HOMELAND SECURITY

The past year has been an eye-opening experience for all Hoosier families. On September 11, 2001, we were exposed to a disaster that never before seemed even a possibility. Just over a year ago, as we looked on in horror to what was happening in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania, we developed a new sense of loyalty to our country and a new definition for the word patriotism. Since that day, we have learned that we must all work together to ensure our safety as a country.

Local communities, the state of Indiana and the federal government have worked hard to ensure the safety of Hoosier families and all citizens of the United States since this tragic event. I am proud to say that our state has played an important role in this venture by developing numerous safeguards to protect against a terrorist threat.

Indiana has developed a comprehensive plan for our state, should such terror ever strike our soil. Just as our federal government is working to ensure homeland security on the national level, we must work with them to protect our state in the best way possible.

Indiana has contributed to this in a variety of ways. We have created a Counter Terrorism and Security Council, which is made up of 18 leaders in the state. Their mission statement is to develop and implement a comprehensive state strategy to detect, prevent, and protect against possible terrorist threats. The 112th General Assembly also passed enhanced criminal penalties for any terrorist activities and a new statewide voice and data communications system has been adopted which allows communication with local, state and federal authorities. Furthermore, we have expanded the training for EMTs and emergency personnel so they will be able to administer the antidote to nerve gas, in case there is ever a disaster at the U.S. Army storage facility in Western Indiana.

Further action to deter terrorism in Indiana includes a plan to combat identity fraud. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles is working with the Counter Terrorism and Security Council to develop a comprehensive plan to keep terrorists from obtaining false identification. Though a terrorist threat is the major concern with identity fraud, it could also be used by common criminals to flee justice after committing a crime.

The federal, state and local governments have worked hard to ensure security where we live. Our homeland security has never before received this kind of attention. It is my hope that all of these efforts will prove unnecessary, however, we now know it is necessary to always be prepared.

*Garton represents District 41, which includes Bartholomew County and portions of Johnson and Shelby counties.*

# Straight from the Senate

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